

'A small group of ROs have a disproportionate influence by the nature of what they do'

Offer in the new, convenient Handy Size'.

Any one who has wrestled with manpower targets, high-level budgets or ammunition allocations finds this sort of thing a doddle. As wives tend not to welcome advice in the shopping department, the RO has time to browse in the aisle set aside to wine and spirits.

It has taken time to show up in the statistics that are, traditionally, only produced six years after the event but this RO browsing is now a source of distress in the EU.

It appears that significant numbers of ROs are buying wine NOT produced in Europe. It is Australia, New Zealand, Chile and little known vineyards of the Faroe Islands that are attracting their business. (69 subjects in Catterick.) This irresponsible attitude is to the detriment of France, Germany, Spain and Italy. Accordingly, a decision has been taken to eradicate the selfish attitude demonstrated by the RO clique and another Agency, a sub-branch of the RMA, is to be established. *'The Wine Police'* will have a representative in every supermarket, charged with the supervision of ROs. There is provision in the legislation for... Well; you can probably guess the rest.

Exempt from these new regulations

One group of ROs need to be exempted from these new regulations and they are the retired medical and dental officers of all three Services. Mr Hoon is, at the time we go to press, still the Secretary of State for Defence. He has successfully run the medical services into complete oblivion and the British Army is now totally dependant upon reservists for medical cover.

Mr Hoon and his successors have a problem. An expensive recruiting drive for doctors has failed. Presumably potential recruits ask, "Why sit in the Iraqi desert when I can be up all night having fun in a Glasgow Accident & Emergency Ward?" As a high percentage of the British Army looks to be committed to Iraq in the long term and medical cover for those soldiers is required, the MoD is lobbying Brussels in an effort to free retired doctors and dentists from the aegis of the RMA. A decision is expected soon.

Finally. A small group of ROs have a disproportionate influence by the nature of what they do. A prime example is Colonel Michael Dewar who is not only a scholar and a gentleman but, in addition, he edits this most excellent periodical. He is an opinion former, a person of perspicacity and fine judgement. Now I don't have any details but what I've heard on the vine is that he and people like him are to receive 'Special

Attention.' Well, quite right too. I mean you can't go on saying what you think all over the place. I suppose that some of those who contribute to the pages of 'The Officer' could be a bit vulnerable if they don't toe the line.

It has to be said that if...

Oh, hang on a minute. There are three very big chaps in leather overcoats at the front door... They've just rolled up in a van with blacked out windows...Can't think what they might want?...

Sustainer has written for every issue of 'The Officer' until now. And provided he is unscathed by his interview with the men in black leather coats, we hope he'll be back in the next issue. Until then his books 'Reveille & Retribution', 'Spit & Polish', and 'Friend & Foe' are all available by mail order on 0207 263 5850 or at www.sustainer.co.uk Copyright@Sustainer Publications May 2003



Illustrations by Tim Sanders

Looking for Somewhere to Retire?

Do you, or do you know somebody who is looking for a peaceful retirement?...then read on

Following on from the previous article in the “Can We Help?” series that described the services of the Employment Department, we now return to the homes and housing business of the Officers’ Association to remind you of the excellent facilities available to ex-officers at Huntly and Macdonnell Gardens. Over the years, both Huntly and Macdonnell Gardens have enabled many ex-officers to enjoy a deservedly comfort-able and companionable lifestyle that might not otherwise have been possible.

There comes a time in your life when the prospect of yet another trip to the supermarket fills you with gloom, when the bills seem to populate the door mat each week rather than quarterly, and when your only company during the winter evenings is the television. Had enough of this? Then the Officers’ Association may just have the answer to those ex-officers who wish to turn their back on the drudgery of solitary retirement.



“I have now been a resident at Huntly for the last ten days and it has exceeded all expectations. I sincerely thank you for making entry here so easy and comfortable.” Squadron Leader - May 2003.

Huntly

The Association owns and manages a very high quality residential home for single male and female ex-officers. Set in its own magnificent grounds overlooking the Teign estuary in South Devon, Huntly offers an excellent standard of accommodation within a caring and friendly environment where each resident is assured of a centrally heated private room with en suite facilities. Residents can participate in a range of activities both within the house, and further afield in the local community and beyond.

The application process for Huntly is kept as simple as possible, although there are a few formalities to be completed. Ex-officer applicants should be aged over 65 years, be relatively mobile for their age and able to provide a satisfactory medical report. We need the medical report to assess whether Huntly would be suitable for the applicant because it does not possess the support facilities of a care or nursing home. Huntly is a retirement home with the feel of an officers’ mess where our residents can enjoy all that the home has to offer in the friendship and comradeship so reminiscent of their time in the Services. We have a number of residents aged 90 years or more, but please remember that the longer you leave your application the more difficult it becomes to accept you into Huntly as your health declines with old age. Prospective residents are also invited to visit the house and stay overnight, allowing them to get the feel of the place before confirming their application. They then meet a small committee of local Trustees for an informal interview prior to admission. These arrangements go a long way to ensuring Huntly’s harmonious atmosphere.

The Officers’ Association manages the Poppy Appeal for the St George’s Branch of the Royal British Legion. Last year the Branch raised £140,000 in central London with a handful of volunteers; - this year we hope to do even better. Could you help us by giving up just a few hours of your time on any of the working days from 27 October to 7 November. All you have to do is “rattle” a red poppy collecting tin on the concourse of one of a number of London Underground stations allocated to the Branch. The public are always most generous in supporting the Appeal, but we simply cannot recruit enough volunteers to collect in all these donations. You can help? Marvellous! – please contact the Co-ordinator – Mrs Annie Lethbridge – on 020-7389-5202 who will provide you with further details



THE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION
The national charity helping unemployed, distressed and disabled ex-officers of Her Majesty's Armed Forces and their families.

We are here to provide the following services and facilities:

- Benevolence support and financial help to those individuals in need or distress.
- Advice in finding residential accommodation for the elderly with, if necessary, financial assistance towards the fees.
- Help with finding suitable employment for ex-officers of all ages and those about to retire.
- Residential accommodation for male and female ex-officers
- Sheltered housing for disabled officers and their families.

For further details please contact:
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Registered Charity 201321 Established 1920

All residents pay a standard fee that offers excellent value for money and compares most favourably with other residential homes in the same class. If you feel that you cannot afford the fee, the Association will provide you with access to financial assistance, and rarely, if ever, has this been an obstacle to entry to Huntly.

Macdonnell Gardens

The Association also manages a small tranquil estate of twelve bungalows for disabled officers and their families located at Leavesden just outside Watford. The bungalows and communal garden at Macdonnell Gardens are maintained to a high standard by the Association who also provide the residents with welfare support through the services of one of their local Honorary Representatives. The estate is run under the auspices of the Almshouse Association and residents pay a very modest maintenance contribution that again does not reflect the very high standard of accommodation provided. The Association undertakes all maintenance on behalf of the residents.



“Everybody has made us so welcome since we arrived at Macdonnell Gardens with their cards and offers of help to settle in.” Colonel – August 2003.